Press Release

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Baldwin's Web Site One of the Best in Congress
One of 36 out of 618 House and Senate Sites to Win 2007 Gold Mouse Award

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin's Web site has been honored by the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF), a non-profit, non-partisan management consulting and research organization in Washington, D.C., as one of the best Web sites in Congress. The site, www.tammybaldwin.house.gov , was one of only 36 Congressional Web sites to earn the top (gold) award in *The 2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill.* CMF analyzed 618 Congressional Web sites, including those of all Senate and House Members, committees (both majority and minority sites), and official leadership sites. In 2007, CMF awarded 36 Gold, 34 Silver, and 34 Bronze Mouse Awards. The full report can be found at www.cmfweb.org.

The report praised Baldwin's Web site saying, "In addition to looking professional and hi-tech, the design and layout of Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin's site simplifies things for users looking to get to more substantive information—which is something the site also excels at providing."

Baldwin's Web site includes news of the Congresswoman's activities, votes, and positions on issues, information about the communities she represents, explanations of the many services her Congressional offices offer constituents, and a kids' page with links to youth-oriented government sites. Until January 31, the site also invites constituents to sign-up to receive a comprehensive email survey of their opinions on key issues now before Congress.

After winning a Bronze Mouse Award last year, Baldwin is pleased with improvements to the site and the resulting recognition. "I want my Web site to be user-friendly, informative, and an effective means of communicating with the people I represent," said Baldwin. "The Gold Mouse Award is a welcome honor, but I see it as a challenge to make the site even more useful in the coming year," Baldwin said.

(more)

The 2007 Gold Mouse Report and Awards are part of the "Connecting to Congress" research project, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. For this project CMF partnered with researchers from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, University of California-Riverside and Ohio State University to study how Members of Congress can use the Internet to improve communications with their constituents and to promote greater participation in the legislative process.

"Congresswoman Baldwin's Web site shows that she understands the value of creating a virtual office to reach specific audiences who have come to expect having their needs met online," said Beverly Bell, CMF's Executive Director.

"The 2007 report shows that Web sites are an increasingly critical channel through which Members and Congressional committees can communicate with, and hear from, citizens. The Internet is a vital tool for elected officials and the public to use in the give-and-take of ideas and opinions that has characterized the American form of government since its founding," Bell said.

Web sites were graded on how well they incorporate five basic building blocks which extensive research identified as critical for effectiveness: audience, content, usability, interactivity, and innovation. Using these building blocks, an evaluation framework was developed by CMF and their research partners at Harvard, Ohio State, and the University of California-Riverside which would be fair and objective while still taking into account important qualitative factors that affect a visitor's experience on a Web site.

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